
TRIBUTE TO PROF. DR. ROKSANDA PEJOVIĆ

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*Ivana Perković**

University of Arts in Belgrade

Faculty of Music

Department of Musicology

NARRATIVE MONOLOGUE AND (INTERNAL) DIALOGUE: IN MEMORY OF ROKSANDA PEJOVIĆ (1929–2018)

In early January 2018, Prof. Roksanda Pejović (Serbian Cyrillic: Роксанда Пејовић, 11 December 1929 – 5 January 2018) died at the age of 88. Despite her advanced age, her passing was unexpected: following a brief illness, which she fought with much dignity, Aja left us quietly, in her sleep.

Roksanda Pejović was not just a musicologist, professor of music history, and art historian. She was a genuine and broadly educated intellectual, true to herself and her ideas; right up to her last day, she remained a committed and active observer and participant, acutely aware of her own priorities, attitudes, virtues and qualities, but also shortcomings. Both as a scholar and professor, she constantly used her own example to demonstrate the importance of constant learning and curiosity; for her, it went without saying, unconditionally, that

* Author contact information: ivanabperkovic@gmail.com.

one's education had to be broad and versatile. She despised banality and pomposity; she was critical of others and even more so of herself. Her openness and spirit attracted attention and made her a favourite in almost every company; using her sense of humour, she solved difficult situations with ease. For sure, Roksanda Pejović could also be caustic, brusque, direct, and unyielding; many will remember her for shunning tactics and openly expressing her opinions, without caring too much about the reactions or feelings of her interlocutors. Discussions with her often turned loud and heated; but they never sank into monotony or barrenness.

Roksanda Pejović acquired her first B.A. degree from the art history study group at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade in 1954; the title of her final thesis was “Проблеми историје уметности 18. века” (Serbian Latin: “Problemi istorije umetnosti 18. veka” – Issues in 18th Century History of Art).¹ Already the following year she acquired another B.A. degree, from the Department of History and Folklore at the Academy of Music in Belgrade, with a thesis on Robert Tolinger. Eight years later, she received a Master's degree from the Academy of Music in Belgrade; the title of her Master's thesis was “Музичка критика и есејистика између два светска рата” (“Музичка критика и есејистика između dva svetska rata” – Interwar Music Criticism and Writing), supervised by Stana Đurić Klajn (Стана Ђурић Клајн). She acquired her doctoral degree in 1984 from the Faculty of Philosophy in Ljubljana, under the supervision of Dr Dragotin Cvetko. The title of her doctoral dissertation, which successfully combined her rich knowledge of art history with that of music history, was “Представе музичких инструмената у средњовековној Србији” (“Predstave muzičkih instrumenata u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji” – Representations of Music Instruments in Medieval Serbia).

One might describe the scholarly style of one of the most prolific Serbian musicologists as that of narrative monologue. It pervades her 34 published books, hundreds of articles, a plethora of encyclopaedic entries, and a large number of other writings. Her bibliographic output from the last 20 years alone comprises no fewer than 15 books; among others, it includes *Musical Instruments in Medieval Serbia*, her monograph published in English (2013),² teeming with ‘fascinating descriptions’, in Tilman Seebass's assessment, ‘the result of a

¹ Roksanda Pejović spoke to me about her scholarly preoccupations and approach to her profession in an interview published in this journal in 2014: “Мало шта сам почела, а да нисам завршила“ / “There are few things that I started and left unfinished. An interview with Roksanda Pejović”, *New Sound, International Journal of Music*, No. 43/I, 2014, 7–16.

² Roksanda Pejović, *Musical Instruments in Medieval Serbia*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, 2013.

tireless and lifelong effort'.³ Impressive by international standards as well, Pejović's list of published works is the result of her painstaking work and persistent, even fanatical efforts to enrich Serbian music historiography from various perspectives, to keep extending and complementing currently available insights.⁴

From the very beginnings of her professional scholarly engagement, Pejović's work in musicology was shaped by a continual intertwining of several topics: the iconography of music, especially concerning Serbian medieval monuments and, more broadly, the Byzantine world, which was a 'natural' field of interest for someone who was educated not only as a historian of music, but also as an art historian. Then, no less important, there was the domain of music criticism and writing on music, which was a major interest from the early 1990s and especially during her final decade. For instance, from 2008 to 2018 alone, she published five books on the writings of Stana Đurić Klajn, Branko Dragutinović (Бранко Драгутиновић), and 'writers on music from the latter half of the 20th century: from Petar Konjović to Oskar Danon', then she studied the work of Pavle Stefanović (Павле Стефановић) and Dragutin Gostuški (Драгутин Гостушки), while her final book addressed the activities of 'Belgrade Music Academy alumni since 1945'.⁵ It is precisely these areas of her research and scholarly work that are inseparably intertwined and linked with those oriented towards musical performance, a subject that Pejović treated in

³ Tilman Seebass, "Roksanda Pejović, *Musical Instruments in Medieval Serbia*. Belgrade: University of the Arts – Faculty of Music, 2013. 325 pp. with numerous illustrations in colour and black and white. 1 CD. ISBN 978-86-88619-25-7", *New Sound, International Journal of Music*, No. 43/I, 2014, 202.

⁴ Pejović published her final bibliography, titled *Биографија и библиографија (Biografija i bibliografija – Biography and Bibliography)*, in 2013.

⁵ *Коментари текстова Стане Ђурић-Клајн. Поводом стогодишњице рођења (Коментари текстова Стане Ђурић Клајн. Поводом стогодишњице рођења – Commentaries on Texts by Stana Đurić Klajn: On the Centenary of Her Birth)*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2008; *Преглед музичких догађања (1944–1971). Бранко Драгутиновић (Pregled muzičkih događanja (1944–1971). Branko Dragutinović – An Overview of Musical Life 1944–1971: Branko Dragutinović)*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2009; *Есејисти и критичари. Од Петра Коњовића до Оскара Данона (Esejisti i kritičari. Od Petra Konjovića do Oskara Danona – Essayists and Critics: From Petar Konjović to Oskar Danon)*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2010; *Комплексно посматрање музике: Павле Стефановић. Драгутин Гостушки (Kompleksno posmatranje muzike: Pavle Stefanović, Dragutin Gostuški – A Complex View of Music: Pavle Stefanović, Dragutin Gostuški)*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2012; *Критике, есеји и књиге. Први београдски музичари – дипломци после 1945. године (Kritike, eseji i knjige. Prvi beogradski muzičari: diplomci posle 1945. godine – Reviews, Essays, and Books: Belgrade's First Musicians – Post-1945 Music Graduates)*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2016.

an extremely large number of writings, including *Српско музичко извођаштво романтичарског доба* (*Srpsko muzičko izvođaštvo romantičarskog doba* – Serbian Music Performance in the Age of Romanticism), *Опера и балет Народног позоришта у Београду* (*Opera i balet Narodnog pozorišta u Beogradu* – The Opera and Ballet of the National Theatre in Belgrade), and *Концертни живот у Београду (1919–1941)* (*Koncertni život u Beogradu (1919–1941)* – Belgrade’s Concert Life 1919–1941).⁶ Delimited by – but not restricted to – these bounds, the richly varied musicological profile of Roksanda Pejović is characterised by enthusiasm, curiosity, persistence, and directness.

Reading ‘between the lines’, we learn a lot about Roksanda Pejović as a music historian and musicologist: she was a scholar with a penchant for engaging in narrative monologue set within broad historical panoramas. She commanded a rich knowledge in various fields and generously offered her readers a wealth of meticulously gathered information. She was happy to express her own conclusions, engage in polemics and discussions, but did not shy away from revising her opinions either. She was never afraid, as Katarina Tomašević aptly noted, to ‘complement or reassess certain topics and fields from a new perspective’.⁷ Using her books’ rich appendices, such as various kinds of overviews, tables, and chronological lines, her readers have easy access to the information she offers so generously, while her straightforward writing, often condensed to the utmost, though motivated by the desire to be accessible, is sometimes enigmatic and intelligible only to those familiar with the style of Roksanda Pejović’s narrative monologue.

Like many of her colleagues, university professors across the world, Pejović prioritised her scholarly work, attaching only a secondary role to her teaching, as she was often happy to assert. And yet, her work in teaching proved to be a rather significant stimulus in her treatment of, first, professional and then also research and scholarly topics, so one could speak of an encounter, interaction, and process that benefited both sides of Pejović’s professional work, rather than a polarisation between them. Paradoxically, even though she did not regard ped-

⁶ *Српско музичко извођаштво романтичарског доба*, Belgrade, University of Arts, 1991; *Опера и балет Народног позоришта у Београду*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 1996; *Концертни живот у Београду (1919–1941)*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2004.

⁷ Катарина Томашевић (Katarina Tomašević), “Музиколошки портрет Роксанде Пејовић” (“Muzikološki portret Roksande Pejović” – A Musicological Portrait of Roksanda Pejović), in: Ивана Перковић-Радак (Ivana Perković Radak), Драгана Стојановић-Новичић (Dragana Stojanović Novičić), Данка Лајић (Danka Lajić; eds.), *Историја и мистерија музике. У част Роксанде Пејовић* (*Istorija i misterija muzike. U čast Roksande Pejović* – The History and Mystery of Music: In Honour of Roksanda Pejović), Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2006, 41.

agogy as her central professional challenge, she devoted almost her entire career to that calling. With the exception of a single year at *Jugokonzert* (1956), Pejović was active as a professor for almost four decades, first at the Stanković High School of Music (1957–1975) and then at the Faculty of Music of the University of Arts in Belgrade (as an assistant, associate, and full professor, 1975–1995). Upon her retirement, she did not abandon teaching, remaining active in undergraduate and graduate teaching for a number of years. She supervised close to 30 B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. final dissertations. Of all those who graduated from her class, ten of her former students found jobs at faculties and academies in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Kragujevac, various scholarly organisations – the Musicology Institute of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts and various institutions abroad, and many of them in media, musical life, and renowned high schools of music. In other words, almost all of them have remained in musicology, thanks to the spark ignited in them by Prof. Pejović. Following her retirement, she never declined to directly impart her experiences to students and young musicologists, to share her knowledge with them, to direct them to the literature, and generously offer her insights into primary sources, whenever she had them.

As a university professor, Pejović focused more on teaching her students *how* to think and solve certain problems rather than *what* to learn.⁸ She did not strive to ‘cover’ every unit, but sought to encourage independence and individual research. This approach sometimes caused unease among students used to the principle of ‘learning by listening’ and those focused on reproduction. I know many who were confounded by the fact that after Pejović’s lectures their notebooks remained empty, without notes they could use to prepare for the final exam. Always curious and full of enthusiasm, explosive and spontaneous, she was only too happy to break the myth of the ‘know-it-all professor’. She was happy to admit if she did not know something and on such occasions she enjoyed learning along with her students. She liked to use her introductory lectures to offer the general framework of a given topic and then she would seek to motivate students to devise their own research strategies, critically to re-examine existing insights, and search for new ideas. With much wit and openness, in her lectures in music history, she would state her opinion, contradict, provoke, and stimulate her students to think differently and learn from each other. She was

⁸ For more on Roksanda Pejović’s teaching methods, see Ивана Перковић-Радак (Ivana Perković Radak), “Педагошке искре Роксанде Пејовић” (“Pedagoške igre Roksande Pejović” – The Pedagogical Games of Roksanda Pejović), in: Ивана Перковић-Радак, Драгана Стојановић-Новичић, Данка Лајић (ур.), *Историја и мистерија музике. У част Роксанде Пејовић*, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2006, 57–65.

especially fond of in-class discussions and on those occasions we would often witness her internal dialogues, a ‘type’ of teaching characteristic of Prof. Pejović. It was in such instances that she ‘opened up’: sharing with us her scholarly, intellectual, moral, and emotional preoccupations and states. Following a system of complex associations, Pejović’s internal dialogue could ‘lead’ so far away from the lecture topic at hand that afterwards it was almost impossible to return to the ‘assignment’. However confusing, such moments were never deprived of more profound contents or wit and were invariably special and unique.

This is my first text that my professor will not read or comment on. Nevertheless, somehow I can still feel the flame of her passion, energy, faith, sincerity, openness, and ability to share. And though I know that she would find something to criticise in this text, too, with which I would completely concur, I believe that somewhere, deep down, her eyes would smile at me, the way only she could do.